

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

September 27, 2016

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**SUBJECT: WATER DEPARTMENT'S ENHANCED CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENTS**

This Informal Report is being provided to update the Mayor and City Council on changes the Water Department is implementing regarding how it communicates with customers when it replaces a lead service line. These changes begin Oct. 3, 2016.

Lead was one of the service line materials used for many decades before being banned by the 1986 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The service line runs from the water main to the home. Ownership is shared, with the city owning the portion from the main to the meter, including the meter. The property owner is responsible for the portion from the meter to the home or building. Fort Worth estimates that 1 to 2.5 percent of the city-owned service lines are lead, but the water utility does not have records on where these may exist. Because about half the system has been built since lead was banned, the utility is confident of areas that do not have lead service lines.

Historically, the Department has replaced lead service lines as they are found in the course of Field Operations maintenance activities, such as a leak on a service line or excavation during a main break repair. The department replaced more than 4,000 lead service lines from 2005 through 2015 fiscal years, according to Field Operations work order data. There was no communication with customers when this work was performed.

Lead service lines have also been replaced when part of a water main rehabilitation project in the Capital Improvements Plan. These projects are performed by contractors. All service lines are replaced as part of these projects, regardless of service line material pipe material. In these cases, the department was completely unaware if a lead service was replaced because contractors were not required to notify the department when a lead service was found during the project. The only communication with customers was regarding the overall project scope and timeline.

The situation in Flint, Michigan has placed a great deal of focus on lead in drinking water. For the past six years, EPA has been working toward Long Term Revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule. A proposed revised rule is anticipated in 2017. Last December, the National Drinking Water Advisory Council issued a report to EPA regarding suggested revisions to the rule. The proposed revisions place a heavy emphasis on education and outreach activities because removing all leaded materials in contact with drinking water is a shared responsibility between public water systems and homeowners and building owners.

The water department is committed to performing a complete inventory of service line materials on both the public and private side of the meter, and then removing all lead from the public side. This will take several years to accomplish.

As lead service lines are located through the inventory process, customers will be notified by mail of the discovery. The mailing will include a letter and educational materials about other sources of lead exposure and steps they can implement to reduce their exposure to lead in drinking water.

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When clusters of lead service lines are found along one street, these will be handled through the Water Capital Improvement Plan, and likely involve replacing the entire water line as an engineering project. The Water Department will hold a meeting with the customers during the design phase and again prior to construction, emphasizing the lead existence of lead service lines and ways to reduce exposure. When the customers are placed onto temporary service during construction, contact will occur to implement the flushing protocol in the home.

When there is only one or two lead service lines found on a block, work orders will be created for Field Operations crews to make the replacements. Field Operations crews also replace the public portion of lines they find during the course of maintenance activities, such as leak or break repairs.

When Water Field Operations staff replaces the public portion of the lead service line, the field crew will see if anyone is at home and, if someone is home, work with the customer to have internal faucets flushed immediately. The crew will provide an informational packet to the customer. If no one is at home, a packet is left on the door and the department will mail a letter and packet within three business days.

When lead or galvanized steel service lines are found on the customer side, customers will be notified through a letter with the educational brochures.

The Water Department is also offering one free lead test to customers when lead service lines are found. If customers do not follow up within two weeks to receive the free test, laboratory staff will follow up with the customers.

Copies of the brochures the utility is providing to customers are available from the Water Department office.

Should you have any additional questions please contact Carman, Water Director, at 817-392-8246.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**